

# SOUTHERLY

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SYDNEY

Edited by  
R. G. Howarth, A. G. Mitchell and Other Members  
of the Association.

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NUMBER ONE

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## RESPITE

War for a while is a chair by a parlour fire,  
Where women turn over and over their knitting puzzles;  
Through spires of cypress, and rhinestones of rain on the wire,  
Comes a view of wagons from home. What quizzical muzzles!  
The push of their query to all through slats of a crate!  
Pigs! Tamworth-Berkshires! with black and tan backs to salute one,  
Such a file of smug morituri, unaware of their fate!  
A green paddock opens a red clay slope, for the fun  
Of two gambolling dogs, white streak of a terrier  
Outracing the collie below, while they dodge, or retreat;  
In a leap, they collide, whoof! writhe all the merrier,  
Then tumble apart at last and return to their beat,  
Twin shuttles, that weave in their battle embroidery,  
With a pinnacle border of pines, brown candles unlit,  
And young tufts beyond reach, hither thither eternally.  
Showers flung by the palsied hand of the moment flit,  
Feathering with silver down each dark tree cluster;  
However often it comes there'll still be surprise  
In the shaking laughter of sunlight on leaf lustre;  
Still, still, when I am gone, for other eyes.  
The lovely golden peaks of lachenalia  
Will lock themselves with lilies in an oval pool,  
The chain of their tilting caps in bacchanalia,  
A wreath for the sinuous fans of the carp they fool.

E. V. BARTON.



## EDITORIAL

It is gratifying to record that, even in such a time as this, the response to our appeal for financial aid to *Southerly* has been prompt and generous. For the time being, the full continuance of the magazine is assured. Sincere thanks are tendered to donors not only for their contributions, but even more for their interest. It is evident that *Southerly* has consistently loyal supporters. If, now, others should feel moved to follow the example thus set, there is no question that we should be enabled to overcome further difficulties and look forward confidently to the future. A renewed appeal may therefore here be made to those whose interest is as strong but who have not yet found time or opportunity to show it in the most tangible way.

Under present conditions, it is inevitable that each issue of the magazine should be late. Approximately double the time previously taken is now required to pass the material through the press. Subscribers are therefore asked to be indulgent, under the assurance that they will receive their copies as soon as these become available, and that they will be informed if any change in the number of issues published, or any permanent departure from the usual times of publication—April, July and September—has to be made.

In some quarters, misconceptions of the nature and purpose of *Southerly* still appear. For example, here or there a writer hesitates to contribute, regarding *Southerly* as strictly the organ of the Australian English Association; or again, a reviewer—perhaps wilfully—overlooks that function and censures the Editors for including matter which may be of less interest to general readers than to members of the Association. It must be repeated that, in *Southerly*, the Association, besides necessarily reporting its other activities, hopes to represent Australian authorship, criticism, and scholarship at their best. At times, let us think, it succeeds in this object. But everyone, without discrimination, is invited to contribute, and so to assist in upholding or improving the magazine's quality.

And now a personal word. To the Editor, the production of *Southerly* has been truly among the things that "prop the mind". In the distresses of our times, a strong conviction of its immediate value and future significance has constantly been with him. It is therefore with great regret that, for health reasons, he must give up this work—at least for the remainder of the year. His feeling is, however, tempered with relief and pleasure that Dr. Mitchell finds himself free enough to act as Editor, and that Miss Herring, in addition to her duties as Editor of the Association's leaflets and reports, will be able to assist him. It is indeed fortunate for *Southerly* that they are available. To them a pleasant term of office, as uncomplicated by financial worry as may be, wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth.

### MARINO

Marino, where the wind is never still,  
where gullies slash the clean and rounded hill,  
where ancient warriors made their ancient kill.  
This now the outskirts of the creeping city seems,  
where once were sky-old myths from time of dreams.  
Marino, where the Norfolk pines adapt their song  
to the swift memoried rustle of the kurrajong,  
to wind-twisted gully-swirl of gum-tree,  
to sheoak's restless echo of the neighbouring sea.  
From you the long smooth beaches run  
—white from a million footsteps of the sun—  
north to where mangroves draw their blood  
—past Outer Harbor wharves—to depths of mud.  
South past your head the waves crash white  
on cliff on cliff to Jervis with its light.  
The reeds about the cliff-foot pool all sing  
to the high banded-plover's passing wing  
when, day or night, that swan-like honking sounds  
above your hills. When tides have done their rounds,  
and the last gull swept the water to the point  
at night the old house creaks in every joint.  
Then moon shines white upon the rounded hill,  
dark ghostly warriors stalk their ghostly kill.  
Marino, where the winds are never still.

IAN MUDIE.



## VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY (1894-1930)

By PAM. BROAD

Listen,  
 literary brothers!  
 You sit  
 eyes drowning in tea,  
 your velvet elbows worn with scribbling.  
 Raise your eyes from the unemptied glasses!  
 Disentangle your ears from those shaggy locks!

MAYAKOVSKY made his mark in Russian literature when it was the poet's rôle to rouse men to battle or to celebrate victories. Subsequently he devoted his raucous voice and great inventive talent to the service of the Revolution, and to his death continued apostrophising the evils of the day: he wrote about bread prices, the New Economic Policy, the food supply, international events, a party comb-out, and the Chinese Revolution:

War,  
     daughter of imperialism,  
 stalks,  
 a spectre, through the world.  
 Workers, roar: Hands off China!—  
 Hey, Macdonald,  
     don't meddle  
 in leagues and muddle speeches.

His verse is the most complete denial of the graces, the subtleties, the intimacies of the poetry of the age that lies behind him. The bold, posteresque imagery, the raucous rhythms of this bull-throated giant, his studiedly uncouth diction, his plebeian exuberance, his resolute iconoclasm—all account for the vogue of his verse in a day of stress and change. "The poet is not he who goes around like a curly lamb and bleats on lyric love-themes, but the poet is he who in our ruthless class struggle turns over his pen into the arsenal of weapons of the proletariat, who is not afraid of any dirty work, any theme about revolution, about the building of a people's industry, and will write agitation pieces on any economic question." Such were Mayakovsky's "poetics" when he died.

Mayakovsky was twelve years old when, upon the death of his father, a forester, the family removed from the Caucasus to Moscow, and exchanged comfort for poverty. His schooling

was spasmodic. At fourteen he joined the Bolshevik faction of the Socialist Party, became an agitator, and was imprisoned for eleven months, when he did most of his reading. Upon his release he attended art school, from which he was expelled for his contempt of public taste. He worked at his poetry and starved.

The literary activity of Mayakovsky proceeds from 1911, as the originator with Chlebnikov of the Futurist Manifesto, with the provoking title "A Slap on the Face to Public Taste" (1912). Chlebnikov (one of the most individual, curious and stylistically influential poets of the time) made a savage onslaught on grammar and syntax, whilst the stentorian Mayakovsky overwhelmed the reader with manifestos demanding the destruction of the pale æstheticism of the Symbolists and the dry academism of the classics. Whereas Mayakovsky made a political platform of Futurism, Chlebnikov remained apolitical and was primarily interested in the revival of a poetic language. Russian Futurism not only represented a literary reaction against Symbolism; it also heralded the triumph of the revolutionary spirit: it united two types of artist—the purely literary revolutionary, and the politically conscious innovator who justified his literary innovations by his aims of social reconstruction, placing Futurism in the vanguard of revolutionary art in 1918 when it became the LEF ("The Left Front of Art"), which was equivalent to "Futurism at the Service of the Revolution" or "constructivism", an essentially utilitarian art inspiring action—the "building of life".

Mayakovsky had little to do with the theory of Futurism, but he was the driving force behind it. He tried to revolutionise poetical technique with the object of making poetry more comprehensible to the masses. He broke and deformed the Russian syntax, without going to extremes; he developed certain prosodic innovations of the Symbolists, basing his poetry not on a sequence of accented and unaccented syllables (which constitutes the essence of the Russian tonicosyllabic verse), but on the number of stresses in a line, without regard to the unstressed syllables, thus achieving greater freedom and producing novel and not



always disagreeable effects. Finally, and this was most important, he deliberately vulgarised the poetical vocabulary—to suit the common taste. The Revolution enabled Mayakovsky to bring his poetry in closer contact with the masses, by converting it into propaganda verse. He openly styled it such, and excelled in this genre, “crying his wares in the market place with a clamour loud enough to shatter the ivory towers on the hill”.

During the years of constrained foreboding (1912-1916), when art as well as Russia itself was on the brink of a new epoch, Symbolists, Futurists and young prose writers instinctively prepared for the undefined but inevitable rupture. At the beginning of the imperialist war Mayakovsky wrote:

Where people's short vision is cut short  
By the heads of the hungry crowds,  
In the thorny crown of the revolution  
The year 'sixteen will burst in.

The dislocation of literary life occurred with the first shots of the Revolution. In 1918-1919 art suffered the equivalent of material annihilation. All reviews stopped publication. Writers, reduced to the position of simple citizens, discovered themselves superfluous. Deprived of premises and publications, they assembled in the Moscow and Petrograd cafés and read their works to friends and the public. While free with Futurist dynamite, Mayakovsky sensed the overwhelming necessity for declamation. He evolved his rhetorical mass style and in 1917-1918 placed himself entirely at the service of the Revolution. “Into the street, futurists, dreamers and poets” was the slogan given out by Mayakovsky. When the poet himself appeared before his audiences, with his imposing presence, his mighty voice and personal charm, they listened with enthusiasm to his concise and unique declamations.

In 1918-1919 Futurism renewed its war-whoops against literary and artistic “bourgeois prejudices” and appropriated to itself the functions of expressing the Revolution, and interpreting the utilitarian and social theories of poetry. Futurism was to sing mines, machines, mass rebellion and the bustle of cities; it was to “spit on rhymes, arias, rose

bushes and other trash". In his famous command to the Arts Armies, No. 1 (1918), Mayakovsky declared that the poet's task was to be the drummer of the Revolution:

Streets are our brushes  
squares our palettes.

He wrote marches (The Left March and Our March), whose resilient and succinct rhythm was intended to convey the rhythm of revolutionary events. In addition, he wrote agitational satiric verses, pamphlets, and slogans of popular significance. His objective was to convert literature into a social function, the significance of which would depend on the benefit it brought the State. He personified the new generation, its revolutionary materialism and contempt of sentiment, and by emphasising the communal function of poetry, he exercised an enormous influence on Soviet literature, a common feature of which is the imitation of his poetry. But Asseyev, Bezymensky, Ushakov—poets depending almost entirely on Mayakovsky—are outrivalled by the energy of his words, the dynamism of his rhythms, and the impetuosity of his clarion voice.

In 1925 he spent some months abroad, visiting among other places the United States. The spectacle of this seat of capitalism moved him to indignant utterance. He admitted only one kind of romanticism—that of mass movements and class war—and he narrated in his hyperbolic and sweeping style how "The 150 Million" Ivans win over America to communism. This was his own tribute to Messianism. The poem has striking lines, bold images, and apt words. His revolutionary poems include *Mystery Bouffe*, *Lenin*, *October*, *The Flying Proletariat*, as well as a multitude of satires, parodies, and agitpoems; and two good satirical plays, *The Bug* and *The Bath-House*. Artistically his most significant, and creatively his boldest work is *A Cloud in Trousers*, a poem of unrequited love. Of intense strength and independence of form, it was written when he was twenty-two. According to his own statement, he painted three thousand posters and composed six thousand rhymed slogans while he was employed by "Rosta", the official publicity bureau of the Soviet Government.

The poster of the revolutionary struggle required an art that would wield a potent and direct influence—an art that was precise, laconic and telling. “Rosta”, during the civil war, posted bulletins of the latest news, and these bulletins, although made 100 to 150 at a time, by stencil, had a specific of their own. The poster and bulletin were issued to broadcast the decisions of the Soviet Government, to effect a re-formation of daily life and culture, to sound the call to struggle against the enemies that had attacked the young republic. The poster was extraordinarily vivid, and represented high technical and artistic achievement. Mayakovsky developed an individual poster art which succeeded in reducing the “laconic” to the use of mere silhouette—something neither abstract nor purely decorative, but vital and dynamic.

Mayakovsky's is a big, or, as Blok defines it, an enormous talent. He handles the vocabulary with an audacious artisanship embracing war and revolution, heaven and hell. His voice drowns thunder; he treats history familiarly; is on intimate terms with the Revolution, and he speaks of the subject of love as if he were speaking about the migration of nations. Frequently a high degree of pathos in his works is marred by shouting and hoarseness. Each phrase, each expression, each image, is an attempted climax, and such gigantic standards, without proportion, demand an heroic effort to lift a hollow weight.

Though Futurism assured the final defeat of Symbolism, Mayakovsky outgrew the school he founded, Formalism characterising his later poetry. It is the biggest contribution to Slavic poetry of this epoch and over half a million copies of his works have been published.

His suicide in 1930 was a startling drama, and a tremendous loss to Soviet literature, especially as five years earlier he had censured Esenin for doing the same thing. Bezymensky's *Poem About Love* is a posthumous “rebuke” to Mayakovsky:

What signified then  
   for the age  
   this shot,  
 at No. 3 Lubyanskaya Street?



Mayakovsky!

The sum has been added  
but the justification is lacking.  
A bullet

means a deal

in the life of a man,

But NOTHING

in the life of an age.

It is an interesting case of sentiment, eliminated from poetry, becoming a suicidal obsession in life. His acceptance of the "rational" Revolution, by gradually making him eliminate old "emotive" strains to arrive at formally perfect and ingenious poster-poetry, seems to have increased the influence of emotion in his private life and to have driven him to commit suicide for the passion of unrequited love. He shot himself through the heart, leaving the following lines on the table:—

As they say  
"the incident is closed".  
Love boat  
smashed against mores.  
I'm quits with life.  
No need itemizing  
mutual griefs  
woes  
offences.  
Good luck and good-bye.

---

## POEM

Heart, my heart, blood, my blood, you!  
You have no longer life of your own,  
Nor I life, since first you grew  
Into my flesh, breath, bone.

My voice your voice, your hand laid  
Upon the common things I touch;  
As I, these things by you are made,  
From very little, much.

One flesh, body, heart, mind,  
Each from each, there's no release;  
I do not know, I cannot find  
Where you begin and I cease.

H. VINTNER.

## "WHAT'S BECOME OF WARING?"

By ONE

SOMEWHERE, I am walking about in someone's imagination. I am alert and thin as I used to be; grown older, of course; perhaps even slightly grey; but altogether different from what I appear now. This is because he has not seen me since we were young together, and we live in different places. Though I am more or less known here, he has heard nothing of me since that casual separation so many years ago—a parting between two friends who felt no particular emotion about it, thinking, perhaps, that we should meet again; all unaware that the land was so wide and that, once settled in distant parts, we should hardly move out of them again. We had forgotten each other, for the most part; then, one day, a chance hint or recollection or reminder has brought me back to him as I was, and he has wondered: What's become of him? Where is he? What is he doing? Is he rich and happy? Did he ever become an engineer? Is he married? Has he children? And the imagination, starting to work, creates for me appearance, habit, job, family, house, friends—everything, within his own vision or beyond it. Perhaps he envies me, compares his own failure and poor circumstances to my success and wealth. Perhaps he has married unhappily, and with scraggy children and a bitter wife plods on from day to day, hoping for nothing, caring for nothing—like me—or perhaps, on the other hand, he has become king of his town, and one has only to enter its precincts to hear his name mentioned. Perhaps, therefore, he pities me. As he has heard nothing of me since I left the place, obviously I am obscure and unimportant. Or again, he may have gone afield, or even abroad. In America, in Russia, in England—somewhere—he may be making a name and fortune—or he may be starving—or he may be dead.

So, till then, *he* was walking about in *my* imagination—but shifting his shape, for now I think of him I find it hard to picture what he would be like now, under the stress of necessity, or puffed up with power. Loveless! Yes! that was his name—and there was an even more fancy one before it.

I can see him clearly as he was, a brown, sulky boy, my fellow on expeditions of discovery, in larking with the girls, secret-society meetings in the warehouse, stolen rides in the grocer's cart—I could remember and remember—this, that, the other thing—experiences common, no doubt, to all boys. But afterwards, after our good-bye—what then? What did he do, how did he grow? Is he a tall man, a stout man, a cripple, a consumptive—what? Is he a business-man, as he always hoped to be? Does he sit in his own office and direct others—or not? I can't even begin to create him, I can only wonder. For, in spite of his prosaic ambition, his imagination was stronger and more active than mine.

That is why I am sure that I am walking about in his mind. Enough time has elapsed for him to recollect me—since we were such friends and shared so many adventures together, he *can't* separate me from his boyhood. So he has started to rebuild me. And inevitably I am better in his imagination than in the reality.

Who would think to look at me that I am like that?—an old hack journalist, ready to do any and every job, from reporting council meetings to book-reviewing. Married, with children almost grown up, and not caring a damn about me. No money, no future. A wife who discourages me at every turn. I'm figureless, I'm featureless, I've no conversation, I drink too much, I'm scorned or pitied, I miss every opportunity. I just live on, I suppose, to die. One thing, my hair isn't grey, as you think it is, Radcliffe! It persists black, and not all my worries can make the slightest difference to it, it seems. I had a love-affair once, Radcliffe! You'd hardly believe it! And wasn't the old woman peculiar when she found out about it! No more of that for me now, though: I just keep my nose down and go on working, hoping to provide some sort of future for the ungrateful brats and security for my overkind, too-sweet Millie.

I'd much rather be as you think I am. I wish to God I could live only in your imagination! I'm sick of this life, sick of the reality! If only it were possible to change over—to slip out of this into that—to become what you think I am, what you expected me to be—a successful engineer,



making money hand over fist, working hard yet keeping my appearance, so that women found me fascinating, as the girls used to do—sometimes. Married to a beauty, loved by her, blessed with beautiful children, and worshipped by them. God! I would do anything to be that! I would even sacrifice years of life—because, in any case, that kind of life would save you years. None of the strain of this, none of the despondency and futurelessness.—But what's the good of wishing? Nothing like that can be done. I can comfort myself, I suppose, with the thought that the man I should have been is walking about in your imagination, and that as long as you live he will continue to exist.

But you may be dead! In that case, of course, I have simply nothing. I am just myself, the old hack journalist, nondescript, unnoticed, unrequired. Well, if you are dead, there are other friends. Jack will remember me, and so will Maurice and Phil and—what's his name? . . . McKeon's the second, but what was the first? Oh well, he may remember me as Arkins, and as Arkins, even without my first name, I'll be glad to be remembered. I've got to be remembered somewhere! Someone has to recall me as I was, and as I promised to be! Someone must imagine what I became! Someone, surely, will have a picture of me, and perhaps call it up at this moment. I'm not lost altogether, am I? When I die, the family and the friend or two will keep an image of poor old Reg a year or two, but it's not the image I want anyone to have. I don't want to be remembered as I am now, but as I wanted to be! And so I depend on you, Radcliffe, Jack, Phil, ——— McKeon, and all my other early friends, to keep me alive. After all, I do as much for you. ——— McKeon, though I've forgotten the Christian name I used to know so well, you're a solicitor now, aren't you? I don't care much for solicitors, but I'm sure you're an honest one. You always were scrupulous about marbles and pennies and things of that sort. You're tall, handsome, well-mannered, cultivated; you speak well in court; you are popular with the legal body; you are unmarried, live with your charming sister in a house filled with books, have numerous other interests, cherish a secret vice or two, but nothing to render you unattractive.

Well, there!—haven't I done something for you? Now you do as much for me. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, for God's sake let me keep walking about in your imagination—and as good as you can make me! I've got no chance in reality. Give me one, will you, in your mind?

I won't forget it.

## THE WORLD IS A SONG AND IT'S ALL BUNK (Extract)

. . . . .  
This is the prayer, song, poem of the world,  
Sung in monotony.

Twice one are two,  
Twice two are four. . . .

Dearly beloved brethren, we have followed too much  
The devices and desires of our own hearts  
Instead of the devices of pottery and architecture.

Lord have mercy upon us miserable offenders now that we have ceased  
to offend or even defend but have accepted the muck of the sty  
and now wholly holy depend world without end a deadend amend.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's ox,  
Nor his ass,  
Nor his manservant,  
Nor his maidservant—  
Because all work now is done with exquisite machinery  
Thou shalt take hold of this machinery and build the world anew.

Any person who wilfully obstructs,  
Or who maliciously, or negligently causes to obstruct,  
Or who places or causes to be placed or does not remove or cause to  
be removed any obstruction  
From any engine, tender, carriage or truck . . .  
Or who . . . or . . . on, or over, or under, or within, without  
Any engine, tender, carriage or truck . . .  
Or . . . who rides, or suggests to ride or intimates, indicates, incites,  
invites to ride  
On any engine, tender, carriage or truck,

On any part or portion of said

Engine, tender, . . .

Shall learn to debunk lawyers, commissioners, commissars, officials,  
sanctions, uniformity and conformity,

And jump trains, stowaway, disobey and stand upright as men should  
for ever and ever, amen!

Thou shalt join in the litany of the factories, listen to the machines  
speaking.

Now I go clank so you go clank,

No, you go clank so I'll go glank,

Go clank, go clank yougoclanck no yougoclangk.

No yougoclanckyesillgoclanck.

Steelworks, steamwurrks, wurrucks wurkurks.

Wurksurururwurksurkirkirkssomeworks.

My head, my eyes, my lungs gee sweat,

Geswurks steam ashurussurshursh.

Cranklank ankurks

An tanks antanks

In brainswell brain my veins

Are lead, metal, I canurk—cannut—can not—cannot

Work my leg.

It's claguclag uclag no you go clag

No I'll go clag noyougoclag

It's clag uclag. . . .

You shall listen to this meaningless bunk,

Destroy its noise, transplant therein your cows and pigs and soft green  
swards of feudal memory,

You shall build it in cities lawned and treed,

With curious notices,

Pluck no flowers,

Keep off the grass,

Dogs and bicycles not allowed,

Trespassers, billstickers prosecuted by order,

Kept as curiosities of capitalist socialist memories.

The headlines, screamwords of the papers you will look lovingly upon  
as beautiful bliss,

Looked at through the half-closed flattering eyes of history. . . .

HARRY HOOTON.



## THE AWAKENING OF HURRY SCURRY

By KEN LEVIS

At this moment Hurry Scurry is somewhere in the great writhing world of Sydney. He may be innocently 'lifting' inconsequentials from Woolworth's, or unwittingly upsetting fruit-piles in crowded shops, or merely contenting himself with scaling trams—if the driver and conductor show sufficient signs of annoyance and make the sport worth while.

Most of them do.

But wherever Hurry Scurry is, his quick, dirty, brown, little legs are moving to some purpose. At this moment his gang is somewhere admiring him; old ladies will be raising their hands in horror; members of organizations for the safeguarding of morals of others will shake their hallowed heads; a parson or two—if he does focus his eyes on the sinful exterior of Hurry Scurry—will make a note that he must preach next Sunday another sermon on the sanctity of the family. Shop-walkers will suddenly become suspicious as dirty hands move along counter-edges and the gang slithers in and out the swirling of shoppers. Tramguards will curse and drivers suddenly brake their cars as the gang scatters. Here and there a fruit-pile will topple, whilst quick hands rush to pick up the fallen fruit: "Here y'are, mister; we'll pick 'em up for yer!"—one for the pile, two down the shirt when Joe's not looking.

But of all these people who hover about the outskirts of the world of Hurry Scurry, none will worry him—except the shopwalker at Woolworth's, for Hurry knows as well as you or I that it does not do to be caught more than twice at the shoplifting game—even if you are only just over twelve and barefooted and have the necessary innocent blue eyes.

Hurry Scurry was not always in this state of blessedness. It is scarcely a year since he earned just title to his new name.

Hurry Scurry's home was in Newtown. It still is, for that matter. You've probably seen it from your train window—its rear is pushed up against the train line near MacDonalddtown station, just on the right as you come out from Redfern. There's a whole row of houses there, if you like to call them 'houses'—dirty, stale, dank, cramped, paint-peeled terrace-

hovels that should long ago have been swept away but for those that suck money out of this human squalor. Here Hurry lives with his grandparents—an old cranky couple that hobble up to the post office every pension day, and celebrate the State's munificence on a bottle of pinkie from Fred Ward's wine bar.

You would agree there wasn't much life in Hurry Scurry a year ago. A skinny little weed of a kid he was, pale under the dirt, and quiet. Right through his early years he showed no sign of attaining the prestige of a name like Hurry Scurry. I forget what his right name was. His grandpop in his better moments, which were few, called him Sonny. "Hey, Sonny, slip round to Boysie's with this note, an' mind he puts it on the right horse this time!" In his worse moments, which were many, Hurry Scurry's name varied within certain well-defined limits: "Hey, you little bastard . . ."—which, even if correct in a strictly technical sense, was, you will agree, quite uncalled for.

Quite early, the old man hunted him off, out of the way, to school. A day nursery. Hurry was four. A plump lady teacher received the youngster. Hurry was awed by the procedure; his hair had been brushed, sure sign of trouble to come. The plump lady spoke and laughed to make him feel 'at home'. Hurry was unmoved. She placed him on the slippery dip. He descended without interest, gravely, standing up at the foot of the chute as if there was nothing more to be done about the matter. The fat teacher coaxed him without result. Hurry wanted no fuss. He had entered a foreign world of strange people. He distrusted it. The fat lady teacher became less interested in him. He went off by himself and stayed apart.

The school life went on around him. The teachers weighed him when he first came. With the other children, he had a little bottle of milk emptied into him each day. From time to time the teachers would weigh him, look wise, and congratulate each other on the excellence of their system. Every day they played with the children; but Hurry distrusted these strange beings that had entered his world, and kept to himself, and sought intimate companionship with his thumb by sucking it affectionately. That was why it was cleaner than its less

attractive mates. The teachers lost interest in him. They preferred lively kids who slithered down slippery dips and twisted through jungles and played with one another. Hurry was cutting a pretty poor figure in this new world.

And so he went on through school, class after class, year after year. He dreamed his way through the days. No one was interested in him as a friend. The headmaster sent him on from year to year because of his age. The problem of Hurry Scurry in these dark days became more and more pressing. The boy's life was asleep, like some animal doped in hibernation that stirs only when disturbed, and then but to escape annoyance.

At last the time came round for him to leave the primary school. What was to be done with him? The old headmaster and the teachers considered.

"What can we do with the lad?", they said. "He's quite useless."

Then the psychologist, an earnest and good young man, came to the school, and he talked to the dormant Hurry Scurry and he talked to the teachers; and they all shook their experienced heads.

Then the earnest young man said, "This lad must be sent to the Activity School!" Hurry didn't know what an Activity School was. He vaguely wondered, a little disquieted. The psychologist went away. A letter went to Hurry's grandpop, and next year grandpop hobbled along with Hurry to the Activity School.

At the Activity School Hurry found another crowd of boys. They took no more notice of him than the others had done. Life went on around him. People were so many hazy presences drifting remotely through his dream-world. He chummed up with no one—there wasn't enough spirit in him to make a friendship. The boys of his class gradually learned his name, put up with him as a necessary phenomenon, and in general left him alone. Hurry continued his career of doing nothing, of keeping out of everyone's way, of dreaming through his sleepy, timorous life. Then, to his great alarm, the crisis came.



The sportsmaster, a tall, vigorous fellow, was promoting the year's boxing tournament. He came to Hurry's class in his search for fighters. Hurry, half-doped as usual, sat oblivious to the sportsmaster's stirring talk of the stuff that makes fighting men. He appealed for entries. A few hands went up haltingly. Then it was that the wag of the class shouted out Hurry Scurry's name. The class roared with delight. Hurry shrank under the sudden attention; his world suddenly spiralled about him, he forgot even to try to speak. By the time the swirl of confusion within his head was steady-ing itself, the energetic young sportsmaster had left the room.

Hurry found his seclusion somewhat altered. The boys took notice of him. They chaffed him: "How yer knockin' 'em down?", they asked him. "Knock him into a jelly", they advised, as an efficient way of disposing of his opponent. "Snap his spine off!" they added. Hurry took little notice of the teasing, except for a weak and nervous grin, and the chaffing died down—till on the day of the preliminaries he was led, a sheep to the slaughter.

It was cold with his shirt off; but it was not cold alone that made him shiver as they tied the big gloves round his skinny wrists. You could count each rib in his thin body. The mob about the ring barracked for him, out of pure amusement. "Go for him, Snow!" they roared. "Park him on the end of yer punches! Knock 'im out of the ropes!"

The bell rang in alarm. The little plump boy in the opposite corner danced towards Hurry Scurry, who stood hardly knowing what to do. The little plump boy hit him hard on the mouth. Hurry realized that he was being hurt. He got his gloves over his face to protect himself. The fat boy there-upon hit him, thump, thump, thump, on the body. Hurry ran away round the ring. The mob roared in his ears. "Go on! Hit him! Don't squib it! Dingo!"

Hurry weakly tried to fight back. A punch struck his nose. At once it bled. Hurry swung back at the grinning fat little boy in desperation, and hit his face. The plump boy removed the grin and hit him hard again. Hurry hit back. There they stood in a blind fury of punching, swinging at each other like two drowning swimmers, the swings becoming

weaker and weaker. Hurry's head sang, he was dizzy; blindly he swung at the blur in front. The shouting increased. Suddenly Hurry realized he was hitting nothing. He wiped his eyes with his wrists. The fat boy was on his hands and knees on the mat. The tall sportsmaster was counting. He came over to Hurry and, with a grin, held up his hand. The mob cheered him, between their spasms of laughter. "What a fight!" they yelled; and that was when some wag dubbed him Hurry Scurry.

For the first time in his life Hurry found a crowd cheering for something he had done. A new feeling, this. He felt he had broken through something. He began to feel what it was like to be "one of the fellows".

"You've got some guts!" they said; "yer can't fight, but yer didn't squib it!" Rough words that brought him to the threshold of a new world. The hazy figures that had moved as shadows about him, now, in this new world, began to take shape. They began to come to life. He began to come to life, and the amazing thing was that as they became real, so he was made conscious of himself. In the weeks following the fight Hurry Scurry explored the outskirts of this new world. Somehow, he felt, a change had come over things.

Then one night when Hurry got home, his grandfather was drunk. "Get out!" the old age pensioner shrieked at Hurry, "away from here, yer rotter! Just the same as yer mother. Go on! Get out!" There was nothing unusual about this. Every week for years past much the same had happened. It was merely the signal to lie low for a while until the old man began to snore.

This time Hurry Scurry sat in misery on the wash-house roof. Resentment bit deep into his soul. Why should he be always treated like this? Hadn't the fellows told him he had guts? Hadn't he won the first fight of his life? What was more, hadn't they called him Hurry Scurry? Sure, he was really someone. He had earned the dignity of a nickname. No one would do just what they liked with him, Hurry Scurry! His dark little mind kept revolving bitter thoughts. In the agony of his spirit he lowered one dirty leg over the rust-eaten wash-house spouting, then the other, made his way across the

stormwater channel and clambered up to the broad white concrete road stretched out towards the city.

"I won't go back to the old devil", he muttered in his bitterness. "He can go to hell!"

The next morning Hurry Scurry woke early. He was a bit cramped. He had slept among packing cases at the back of a factory. He crawled through the fence and refortified himself in his inexorable resolve. He was gone for good!

Then it was that hunger descended upon him. He strolled along the street. No one was about yet, except the milkman. An idea at once entered his head. He approached the cart. The milkman came running out from a house, jumped on the step, guessed Hurry's intentions, looked at him and shouted: "Scram, kid! Go on, hop it!"

Thereupon the hunger of Hurry Scurry redoubled itself.

Hurry wandered on along the concrete street, until a big boy in a loutish cap grabbed his shoulder. "Hey, scrag!" said the lout, "what yer doin' here?"

Hurry had never seen the fellow before. His heart thumped worse than it had done when the class wag had called out his name for the boxing.

"N-nothing", stammered Hurry Scurry; "I've run away, that's all!" The big fellow left off shaking him.

"Run away, have yer?" he said; "good stuff! I won't bash yer now! Look at me, mate! See me!" He paused for the effect. "I been at Gosford!"

Hurry didn't know just what that meant. Evidently it was something grand. "Have you?" he said in admiration.

"Yep!" said the lout, "but I got away—the police couldn't get me, neither!"

Hurry felt here indeed was a tower of strength.

"Stick with me, scrag!" said the lout. "I'm goin' down to the markets. We'll get some grub down there. I'll show yer how to do all right for yerself in the city. You trust me. I know the ropes. My oath", he said, and spat impressively.

Hurry and the lout went down to Paddy's Markets. They helped the barrowmen with the fruit. In return they took away the fruit boxes and slipped some of the spotted bananas and apples—and a few of the good ones—into their shirts. They took the fruit cases back to the dealers—sixpence a case.

Five shillings for the morning's work. The lout gave Hurry Scurry two of them.

"Now yer know how to make some dough", he said, "it's easy as that!" and he gave one of his more impressive spits.

To Hurry, two shillings was unlimited credit. This was the life. The day stretched before him. What should he do? Eating his fruit, he walked on into the city. Suddenly he stopped before a theatre. The pictures, of course! No one would see him there, or ask awkward questions. He wandered about until the doors opened. With two bags of potato crisps to 'keep him going' he entered the magic coolness.

Hurry Scurry sat on a soft plush seat that sank even under his weight. This was heaven. His old life dropped further than ever from him. He sat crunching his crisps and watching the screen and rubbing his bare legs on the plush seat-covers. The session ended, but he sat there into the afternoon. He went out into the crowd again, two sixpenny bits in his pocket. One of these went on battered savs and the other on a milk shake, with a penny left for Wrigley's. As he made his unpenitent way back to his packing cases a satisfaction beyond understanding filled his soul.

The days went by. Hurry Scurry made deeper explorations into his new world. Of a morning he went to the markets. He got to know the barrowmen. A good morning brought four shillings—an amount so vast that Hurry Scurry wondered how to spend it all in the one day, until he found the delights of the fun parlours.

Then the lout that had been to Gosford and who spat impressively 'let him into the know' of another good racket. Together they went to the dog races and begged programmes from early leavers, selling them to the late arrivals. A lucrative stunt, that Hurry Scurry will recommend to anyone, provided he doesn't cut in on his preserves!

Days of freedom grew into weeks, and the old life slipped further and further into forgotten limbos. Hurry Scurry had long since shifted from his factory yard to an old disused pigeon loft—a much more comfortable arrangement. He lived in a heaven of no-washing. He became more and more dirty, and his clothes became more and more filthy, and his body became more and more skinny—despite all the foods of



freedom he had won for himself—the chocolate frogs and curl-bars and battered sabs and crisps and chips and the liquid stickiness that was sold as raspberry cordial.

Then a screaming southerly buster brought along a spasm of wild weather, and the city was pelted with stinging rain scuds. Hurry Scurry began to cough away down in his chest, so that it hurt him.

It was at this stage that a mountainous young police officer grabbed the shoulder of Hurry Scurry, and asked many questions. He took him along with him to the station, where Hurry Scurry tried to answer more awkward questions, and of course the police soon found out all about him. Hurry Scurry felt that he didn't care much. He was sick. He even began to feel glad he was not going back to his old pigeon loft.

The doctor came and tapped his chest and shook his head, and the result was that a very dejected Hurry Scurry was carted off to the Prince Alfred, where an immaculate sister in white threw up her hands in horror at what appeared to be a bundle of sick dirt.

In the hospital, Hurry Scurry lived for the next three weeks—although for a time he nearly ceased to live. His freedom was gone, but the nurses were kind and he began to like them. Then they packed him off to a rest home at Camden for another three weeks, and emptied far more bottles of milk into him than the teachers had done when he first experienced school. At last, just three months after he had left it with his brand-new nickname, Hurry Scurry was sent back to the Activity School.

"Where've you been, Hurry Scurry?" asked the boys.

Hurry Scurry told them his story. He often told them his story. He became very skilful in telling it. The boys kept on asking him about it—it was such a good story when told to advantage.

The boys listened with great respect and admiration. A new hero was arising, a leader was appearing amongst them.

They were so impressed that, at the next elections, they made him their class captain. Fame had come to Hurry Scurry.

Hurry Scurry at last was awake.

## WRITER AND READER

### AN AMERICAN POET IN AUSTRALIA

*The Place of Love.* By Karl Shapiro. (A Comment Publication. Melbourne, 1942.)

KARL SHAPIRO's volume of poems, *The Place of Love*, cannot be dragged out of the context of his previous work. It must be regarded as an aberration, an anomaly, a poetical mutation.

Shapiro, who is a sergeant with the U.S. Army stationed somewhere in the north, has been in this country for over 12 months. *The Place of Love* was written here, shortly after he had completed another book of poems, *Person, Place and Thing*, published in the U.S.A. last October by Reynal and Hitchcock.

Shapiro won immediate recognition as a major American poet with this book, which is critical, sharply satirical and in no way like the erotic *Place of Love*. Only if one regards the complex war-pattern that gave rise to this collection of love poems can they be seen in their proper perspective.

Filled with contempt for flag-waving patriots who sat safe at home, and against war as were all his generation, Shapiro nevertheless realised that one cannot sidestep a war. *Person, Place and Thing* is full of the bitterness he felt at being thrust into the war and has a good deal of despair in it. These five lines:

My soul stands at the window of my room,  
And I ten thousand miles away;  
My days are filled with Ocean's sound of doom,  
Salt and cloud and the bitter spray.  
Let the wind blow, for many a man shall die . . .

indicate something of his point of view during his first months in this country.

It was then that he had the wartime love experience that produced *The Place of Love*. Exhausted by the major work, *Person, Place and Thing*, and caught up in the rather feverish and greedy passion that characterises wartime love affairs, he wrote the book in a few months. It springs directly from this love affair and is made up of a series of lyrical poems interspersed with incantational prose poems.

There is nothing self-conscious about the eroticism of *The Place of Love*. Obviously Shapiro has liberated himself most fully from sex tabus, so that he can write of the unmentionable without shame or inhibition.

It is when he is doing this that the poems are at their best. Some are obscure, because they are so deeply personal, while with the exception of the opening prose passage "The New Ring", the prose does not completely achieve its object. This is the weakest part of the book, and much of it tends to be merely rather dreary posturing. It tells things which one does not wish to know, which are only egotistical gymnastics. For instance, this passage is very pretentious:

When I was a child I thought, with a terribly shrewd suspicion, that the world had been created *to confuse me*, not to delight or pleasure me, as it was supposed to do the gods. But I would not be confused, in spite of my great fear and wonder. I always understood the intention of the deity, and always smiled to myself so that he could see. In fact we understood one another very well, almost insanely well. . . .

Then to redeem himself, Shapiro writes simply and truly with exquisite humor, "Animals in American zoos are very unhappy".

However close he comes to the precipice of banality—and he does skirt it dangerously close at times—Shapiro always saves himself with his humor and sharp wit.

The opening poems place their accent on the more adolescent aspects of sex. We are almost reminded of Norman Lindsay when we come upon jewels and breasts and hips in a rich profusion. These lines best illustrate the weakness of these overly simple expressions of sex:

And slowly rise, and clutch the Egyptian gown,  
Rending its silk to bare your breast and hips,  
And dance, dance through the naked room like mad!

It is all there, even to the exclamation point.

The poem on Melbourne, one-sidedly cruel and accurate, is I think, the first poem in the book of any real merit. Here Shapiro's satirical quality is apparent, here his humor is cutting and unpleasant and astringent. It is good to read:

The family's sex is English, and all their pain  
More moderate than a long-expected death.

Yet the lipstick is poor, the girls consent  
To lose their teeth and hips, and language whines,  
Raising the pitch to shrill humility.  
At five o'clock the pubs roar on the world  
And milk bars trickle pardon, as the mobs  
Lunge, worse than Chicago, for the trains  
Dispersing life to gardens and to tea.

This is much better than anatomy and silken gowns. This has something to say.

The title poem, "The Place of Love", is a remarkably accurate documentation of the sexual behaviour of human beings, written with insight, without approval or condemnation and with a detached sympathy for the curious and often ludicrous actions of men and women who do not deny their impulses, but cannot so organise their lives as to endow sex with dignity and grandeur, but leave it in the hayfield, the chair and the beach. But, says Shapiro, "the place of love is always propitious", and it would be snobbish not to acknowledge that this is so. I do not think anyone has said this before as Shapiro says it.

Very aware always of the fact of his Jewishness, Shapiro has borrowed from the Bible the theme for the poem in which he tells the story of David and Bathsheba in a rhythm that begins quite

formally and progressively slides into the jazz rhythm of the negro. These last lines of the poem best illustrate the sly humor of the "jazz" passages:

And the Lord blessed David with another son,  
The greatest of the monarchs, King Solomon.  
He wore purple linen; he wore golden shoes;  
He was King of the poets, and he ruled the Jews;  
He was honored by the nations, the dead and alive;  
His songs were a thousand and a thousand and five;  
He had a thousand women in a single room;  
He built a palace a temple and a golden tomb. . . .

Compare this with the biblical solemnity of the opening lines:

And it came to pass in the evening  
When the heat melts in the sky like lead  
And the breeze comes from Baal-Hamon,  
King David rose from his purple bed  
And walked upon the house-top with a kingly tread.

In the poems from "Bathsheba" on, until the end of the book, Shapiro's real quality as a poet can be seen.

In the poem beginning:

I plucked the Bougainvillea,  
In Queensland in time of war,

he uses a simple four-line jingle with an alternate rime to describe his sentimental sending of a purple flower to his lover. It is in the last four lines that the sting occurs:

I sent it inside my letter,  
The purplest kiss I knew—  
And now you abuse my passion  
With "a most victorian Jew"!

Nothing can go very wrong with a young man who finds himself so amusing at times. Such gentle satire removes the suspicion from one's mind that here is a young man taking himself far too seriously.

Again, in almost the whole of the poem beginning:

The chill air of the hired room,  
Is clothing enough for the radiant flesh  
Of lovers who create their own shelter  
And bring, with a touch of humor, flowers,

which ends with the lines:

And now to the Front I am gone to suffer  
Because of the Broader View and of Mother,  
But nobody smiles at the touch of humor,  
The fact that I love you and am not Rupert,

Shapiro makes kindly fun of himself.

Technically, this 29-year-old poet knows what he is about. He experiments considerably, but has a tendency to retain the discipline of the stricter verse-forms. He is at home with the sonnet and moves freely in a conventional four-line, strictly rimed, and decorously anapaestic or iambic verse. When he departs from these set forms, he is just as much at home and at no time does he lose the tension of the poetic line.

He is a poet. He does not indulge in the loose, flabby free-verse rhythms so often used to cover up ineptitude and technical deficiencies.



In the meantime he is not dull. Most of the tricks of the trade are ready to his hand. He is a first-rate craftsman, and one who must surely rank among the leading American poets of today.

It is Australia's loss that in all probability *Person, Place and Thing* will not be available in this country. Because of war and dollar exchange and the complications of a system that regards poetry as an unfortunate mistake, readers here will have only *The Place of Love* on which to base their opinion of Shapiro as a poet.

It is a pity that this aberrant book, this odd book of love-poetry from a poet who before has not written much of love, should be all we have. However, wars end, and dollar exchanges are kinder to poets in peacetime, so that if I say now, this is a poet of genius, this Karl Shapiro, my opinion does not rest solely on this one book, but on the body of his work, which may be available here eventually.

ELISABETH LAMBERT.

## PENGUINS FLY

*Angry Penguins*, No. 4, Transition Number. Edited by Max Harris. (Adelaide, 1943. 4s. 6d.)

IN this new number of *Angry Penguins* the suggestion that the magazine should become the successor to *Art in Australia* has apparently been adopted; John Reed is co-opted as Art Editor, seven reproductions of paintings are included, and half the space of the magazine is devoted to art criticism. If the paper is to continue in this form, a less flimsy binding (austerity permitting) might well be considered by the editors.

The claim that the magazine "is to stand for no brand or branch of culture" is borne out by the triad of articles "Three Views on Art", though naturally none is reactionary. J. D. Blake, of the Australian Communist Party, preaching the unsullied gospel of Marx, hurls a thunderous hail of clichés upon that weather-beaten residential, the Ivory Tower; Albert Tucker's thoughtful but somewhat ponderous tour through the dialectic is written from the same point of view, but finally pleases and surprises by re-stating what is in effect the artist's right to his individual interpretation, though many readers (on aesthetic, not political grounds) will question the self-evident truth of the creed that "an authentic mythological theme can only come from the political left"; and Bruce Williams, refreshingly neither partisan nor polysyllabic, comes out whole-heartedly for the artist as individual. These two latter views are in line with Orwell's dictum, quoted here with approval: "No sermons, but the subjective truth"; though why the subjective truth should lead either to Marxism or to surrealism is to me not clear. One recalls something about "Look in your heart and write"—would this be an acceptable paraphrase of Orwell's "subjective truth"?

Of the reproductions, only one is in colour—Gleeson's "Maintenance of Identity", which is, like all this artist's work, extremely able, and painted in the "riddle-me-ree" convention paradoxically universal among the individualistic surrealists—so that it is hardly fair to judge the rest, of which Counihan's "The New Order", selected by John Reed as the outstanding work in the Anti-Fascist Exhibition (reviewed here), is probably the best. The feeling behind all of them, though unquestionably sincere, appears somewhat commonplace and derivative. A translated article by Gino Nibbi tells us things we already knew about Rousseau le Douanier in a jargon utterly staggering; phrases like "congealed presentiment", "tactile privilege", and "boreal luminosities" are the *dominantia verba* of this language.

The literary material is rather more interesting. Max Harris's four poems sway from very good to rather bad; the strength of this picture of the sea (but in the poem "the lethal element'") as it

. . . strode on in carved remorse  
to toll his death to the patient temporal shore,  
to greet his unmet lover with a surge of tears . . .

contrasts with the flapping feebleness of

. . . into his being  
and its, but that was only prelude to  
the gaunt ingulging. . . .

It is strange, too, that he should be deaf to the disastrous tonal effects of single words out of key with the rest of a poem; this is especially noticeable in "The Word", which gives the impression (too common among contemporary poets) of being an experience not fully assimilated—of lacking "style" in Yeats's sense. Only in the second part of "Elegiac for Donald Kerr" is this really overcome in a true surge and freedom of expression. Yet none of the other Australian poets included is of Harris's stature: a real, but slight and transient pleasure is felt in reading the short lyrics by Lola van Gooch and Marceine Dickfos (though fourteen present participles in eight lines is rather too much); Geoffrey Dutton seems to have only partial control over both form and content, except in "Tasmania"; and the poems by Donald Kerr, Mary Williams, F. Kellaway and Elizabeth Galloway are either very slight or else second-hand. There are also three neat and artfully simple translations from Rimbaud by Sunday Williams, and a typical poem by Dylan Thomas; lastly, the poem "There are Three Things", by the American Karl Shapiro, makes me wish to know more of a writer with whose work I am not acquainted.

The prose includes two short stories—or sketches, rather—and a critique of Baudelaire. Alister Kershaw, in "The Sense and the Virtue", adds one more to the innumerable studies of the self-analytical mind, doubting and immature, and, of course, literary. F. Kellaway's rhythmic prose in his "Spittie's Haystack" is far more interesting and original than his verse; in fact, this sensitive and exciting analysis of boyhood's blindly subtle cruelties and surging panics succeeds, after a shaky start, in achieving its aim more securely than anything else in.

the magazine. Mary Williams, in her article on Baudelaire, attempts to compress into three pages ideas which need much more room for their development; the result is a combination of occasional shrewdness and heavy pretentiousness. And, please, spare us the verb "to fixate".

Finally, may one hope that since *Angry Penguins*, in its editor's words, "moves in terms of the social and cultural movements of our age", it will drop those clever little paragraphs in which less "advanced" writers are treated to an urchin-like cocking of the snook?

S. MUSGROVE.

## AUTHORS IN ARMOUR

*Australian Writers Speak.* (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1942. 2s. 6d.)

Fourteen noted Australian authors have had a hand in the writing of this booklet, which contains nine scripts prepared for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and delivered in its series "Literature and Life in Australia". The talks and discussions here recorded were arranged by the Fellowship of Australian Writers in pursuance of its vigorous and praiseworthy campaign on behalf of our literature and those who produce it. To give the talks permanent form was well worth while. Diverse as their subjects and styles are, all the writers share, as Louis Esson points out in a brief introduction, "a trend of thought, a pattern or ideal. . . . They all express a deep concern for the destiny of their country and a fervent faith in the importance of their literary craft".

Naturally, to treat in a brief and popular manner vexed critical questions—so comprehensive as, for example, the nature of literature itself, the relation of the writer to politics, the effect of environment upon the writer, the reconciliation of nationalism in subject-matter with the universal standards of art, the nature of "working-class" literature, the effect of the writer upon society and the writer's own need for an audience—is inevitably to become involved to some extent in vagueness and confusion of thought. Though our authors have not always avoided the fault here (as, for instance, in the statement that "politics and culture are indivisible in civilization"), it is pleasingly rare, and the arguments put forward are, on the whole, forceful, clear and often provocative. Jean Devanny, for example, defines working-class literature as all that which "coincides with and advances the interests of the workers, irrespective of the class position of the writer", but goes on to say that Kylie Tennant's work "is progressive literature but not working-class. It is decidedly middle-class". In view of *The Battlers*, this judgment is very much open to question. To decide the point, one must refer to the work of the writer itself; and herein lies the most valuable achievement of the authors of these talks—the provoking of a discussion of basic literary canons, with the

work of our own authors as the point of reference. It is rather refreshing, indeed, to find the old literary skirmishes being fought on our own soil, and one feels that this book marks one more stage in the establishing of sound critical standards in the discussion of our literature. For among the authors here represented are many capable and discerning judges, and the book itself is well above the average standard of critical miscellanies produced anywhere today.

When there is so much evidence of a sound and well-balanced view of what it means to be an "Australian" writer, it grates upon the nerves to find such expressions as "dinkum" and "my oath" intruding themselves self-consciously into a serious literary discussion. People talking about literature on the B.B.C. do not feel that the use of a "bah goom" now and then helps to assert their essential Englishness. Usually, however, the style is nicely pitched to the tone of serious conversation proper to such broadcasts, and in only one discussion (that between Miles Franklin and George Ashton) has the attempt to catch the inconsequence of conversation led to inconsequence in the thought itself.

Not one article is without some revealing statement, some stimulating reflection, some pointed and attractive phrases. Particular mention should be made of the admirable analysis of the Australian "environment" and its effect on our literature, by Bert and Dora Birtles, whose discussion is a model radio script into the bargain; of the balanced and penetrating essay by Norman Bartlett on the question "Need Australian Writers Write about Australia?"; of Marjorie Barnard's delightful, if somewhat over-romanticized, talk on "Our Literature"; and, of the pleasantly natural, yet discriminating discussion between Nettie and Vance Palmer on the relation of his audience to the author's production. There are, too, an authoritative examination of the working-class element in our literature by Jean Devanny, a comprehensive account of the difficulties and achievement of Australian dramatists by Leslie Rees, and a discussion of the effect exerted on Australian life by our writers, conducted by Katherine Prichard and Gavin Casey. Frank Dalby Davison answers in a stimulating and necessarily personal fashion the old and almost impossible question "What is Literature?"

One is left with a keen impression that Australian authors, as represented here, are knowledgeable, capable, critical, steeped in their own literary heritage as in that of other countries, frankly accepting the Australian point of view, yet at the same time conscious of the methods by which Australian literature that will be great and universal can be produced. It is to be hoped that, as the forecast restrictions on book production are applied, those who have argued their case so well will be given the utmost opportunity to practise their art; that, in the words of one of them, the Government will "treat Australianism as a matter of ideas and outlook", and give some priority to those obviously well qualified to express both.

W. MILGATE.



## LITERARY LABORATORY

*Meanjin Papers*, Nos. 11 and 12. Edited by C. B. Christesen. (Brisbane, 1942. 2s. each.)

AFTER two years of publication *Meanjin* re-states, through Mr. C. B. Christesen, its aim "to provide a medium for the work of Australian writers—with emphasis, whenever possible, on contemporary trends"; and reminds critics that it is "largely" an experimental literary laboratory". The scope is extensive, and Mr. Christesen does it justice within the limits of the space available to him. In No. 11, Gina Ballantyne and Kate Baker comment on the Cult of the Aborigine, each with her own enthusiasm; Nettie Palmer and R. G. Howarth review recent Australian poetry, the work of Donovan Clarke and Martin Haley, and H. M. Green contributes an interesting appreciation of the poems of J. A. R. McKellar; B. N. Fryer has an article on "Fine Printing".

No. 12 illuminates the Australian scene from literary, sociological, and generally "cultural" standpoints, the main questions being thoughtfully discussed by H. Drake-Brockman in "Australia Phoenix". Miles Franklin pays a tribute to Henry Lawson, and *Meanjin* breaks fresh ground with a rapid but informative survey by Pearl Strachan of contemporary American poetry, the trend of which is, she says, "back to forms which have some connection with tradition".

The same might be said of the verse which in *Meanjin* represents the original work of contributors. The trend indicates a recognition of proved values; it is not reactionary in a pejorative sense. Norma L. Davis wins the *Meanjin* Prize in No. 12 with "To a Man with Wings", which is conventionally conceived and expressed but yet represents an advance by this writer towards a movement of thought untrammelled by the form which conveys it.

F. John Blight is the outstanding contributor. His language takes on rich intensity of colour and sound, and in "The Patriot" the prize-winner of No. 11, he combines individual epithet, antithesis, and a curious flow and ebb of rhyme-incidence with considerable success. His occasional poeticisms are incongruous.

Robert D. FitzGerald invigorates the traditional attitude to "Favour" with a striking metaphor, and Olive Hopegood manipulates the synaesthetic qualities of speech with success in "Letter for Summer". In "Drought", Joseph O'Dwyer's quiet sincerity is somewhat overlaid with a conscious manner. The remainder of the poems vary from Gina Ballantyne's energetic "This is Rebellion" to the carefully preserved simplicity of Judith Wright's "The Company of Lovers". Neil Smith and Rosemary Dobson bring a feeling for language and rhythm to their widely dissimilar subjects. C. B. Christesen is cynical in "Corybantic Antic", and Peter Hopegood is whimsical about his dog.

The verse in both numbers is remarkable for individuality of thought and approach, and for a general preoccupation, and tendency to experiment with, the expressive and evocative qualities of word and phrase.

KATHLEEN BARNES.

## THE AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL DINNER

NOVEMBER 19, 1942

THE annual dinner of the Australian English Association was held at the Millions Club on Thursday, 19th November. The speakers were Miss Beatrice Davis, Miss Elisabeth Lambert, Mr. Justice A. V. Maxwell, and Dr. A. H. McDonald.

Mr. Justice Maxwell, who proposed the toast of the Australian English Association, paid a tribute to the Association's late Life President, Sir Mungo MacCallum, under whom he had studied. The speaker said that, since he was frequently called upon to deal with ambiguities, he was struck by the name of the Association. Though we know that it signifies the Australian branch of the English Association, it might mean a society devoted to the encouragement of Australian English. There is some foundation for criticism of the Australian accent, but we are entitled to resent the suggestion that it is typical of the country. Similarly, American speech is not to be judged by the speech of the gangster film; there are Americans who speak English as well as any Irishman—including Shaw. Parents who are careless or unobservant are greatly responsible for the bad speech one often hears; they are proud if their children attend a conversational class in French or Italian, but do not worry about their own tongue.

Dr. A. H. McDonald, who replied for the Association, spoke of the importance of the systematic teaching of English. The following are the main points of his speech.

Words now can mean almost anything because we do not think what we are talking about; thus such words as "democracy" and "reactionary" are used loosely. We need to cultivate the attitude of the Greek islanders who, after watching a quarrel, said: "The angrier they got, the better their idiom was." The reading of Greek and Latin helps the appreciation of style. It is interesting to compare the structure of Roosevelt's sentences with that of Demosthenes; both use words with economy and gain emphasis through the structure. *Southerly* requires support because it has an important part to play in the encouragement of good expression; by its reviews, for instance, it helps the systematic study of English. It also gives a fair hearing to new writers like the Jindyworobaks, whose enthusiasm, though inevitably exaggerated, is an important ingredient in literary development.

Miss Beatrice Davis, in proposing the toast of Australian literature, said she was glad to believe that our indigenous culture, striking out from the English tradition, had come of age and was capable of

leading a rich and distinctive life of its own. Yet there are still many Australians, ignorant of their own literary background, who would deny that an Australian literature existed; and their ignorance can be partly explained by the failure of schools and universities to instruct them. Lectures in our universities are now repairing this deficiency to some extent.

There is an immense activity in the field of Australian letters today, and, though paper is scarce, publishers want good books—not necessarily books with a popular appeal. No book worth publishing is likely nowadays to go unpublished. Mentioning books published not merely for the sake of sales, Miss Davis referred to the anthologies *Australian Poetry* and *Coast to Coast* (short stories), published yearly with the object of preserving work that was worth while.

The manuscripts that come to an editor's hand are, she said, a strangely mixed lot—ranging from the hopelessly illiterate to those that will find a permanent place in literature. The common faults of our writers are wordiness, lack of craftsmanship, heavy-handedness—in fact, lack of culture and the discipline that it gives; their outstanding virtues are sincerity, vigour, imagination and ironic humour. Remarking that these qualities were no doubt the fruit of our environment, she said that we could look forward confidently to Australia's literary future.

In reply, Miss Elisabeth Lambert said that she believed Australian literature had come of age. The Great Gum Tree tradition is finally dead. Norman Douglas when travelling through Italy saw gum trees and disliked them very much; he said he hoped he would never come to Australia because of them. That should teach us that a culture cannot be self-consciously built up from gum trees or even kangaroos.

Owing to the war, we have discovered ourselves through the eyes of strangers. It took the Americans to make us really feel we are a nation, and the Japanese to teach us that five capital cities and Alice Springs do not comprise our whole continent. We have realised the glamour of some of our ghost towns and mining towns, which have sprung into life again as troop centres, though we know they will sink back into their ghost state again when war ends. There are descriptions in recent short stories of Sydney streets and the waterfront which are as nostalgically evocative as any description of London or the Thames. Douglas Stewart's verse play *Fire on the Snow* ranks with the work of Auden, MacLeish, and Spender. For a long time the Australian has written as if he were an alien in a foreign land, but now, because aliens have taught us that we belong here, we are at last writing as natives.

## AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH ASSOCIATION PUBLICATIONS

The following are available:

## LEAFLETS (one shilling each).

- No. 1. "W. P. Ker." Sir Mungo MacCallum.
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- No. 13. "The Poetry of W. B. Yeats." H. M. Green.
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- No. 1. "The Tempest." R. G. Howarth.
- No. 2. "The Pronunciation of English in Australia." A. G. Mitchell.
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## OFFPRINTS (threepence each).

- No. 2. "Not Understood." Dorothea Mackellar.
- No. 3. "Ulysses." John Anderson.
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- No. 14. Tenth Annual Dinner: Addresses.
- No. 15. "Virginia Woolf." Margot Hentze.
- No. 17. "The Old English Poet and his Craft." A. G. Mitchell.
- No. 18. "Modern American Poetry." T. Inglis Moore.
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- No. 23. "The English Drama: Is it Dead or Dying?" Leslie Rees.
- No. 24. "The Modern Comedy of Manners." J. G. Flynn.
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- No. 28. "The Playhouse and the Play." W. G. B. Cassidy.
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- No. i. "Henry Arthur Jones and the Renaissance of English Drama." H. L. McLoskey.
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 { "A Note on Milton." F. J. Blakeney.  
 { "The Poetry of Louis MacNeice." G. R. Manton.
- No. iv. "Gerard Manley Hopkins, Greek Scholar and Poet." L. C. R. Smith.
- No. v. Annual Dinner, 1941: Summary of Speeches.  
 (Also *Recorder* reports of other Addresses.)
- No. vi. "Modern American Drama." Thelma Herring.

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#### NOTES

*The English Association: Extracts from Report for 1941.*—In the early months of 1941 London was the object of many air raids of varying intensity. We suffered nothing worse than some broken windows, and our office was in continuous use throughout the year. . . .

The war inevitably continued to hamper the growth of the Association. A drive for new members in the summer brought in a few, and the number enrolled during the year was 6 Life Members and 80 others. The loss to the Central Body membership by death, resignation, and those in default of subscription amounts to 156; while the Branch membership has been greatly reduced as a result of more Branches suspending their activities. The utmost economy has been practised, and the financial situation might have been worse, but the Committee must still reiterate their own resolve and their exhortation to all members of the Association to gather in new members. Experience does show that people are often quite ready to join when asked to do so, even though the idea has not previously entered their heads.

Towards the end of the year it was decided to move the office to smaller premises. The change has been effected, and the office is now situated at 3 Cromwell Place, South Kensington, S.W.7.

The Committee regret to report that nothing has come of the approach of the College English Association of America as recorded in last year's report.

The twentieth volume of *The Year's Work in English Studies*, 1939, the twenty-sixth volume of *Essays and Studies*, three numbers

of the magazine *English*, and the Presidential Address for 1941, *On Style*, have been issued to members during the year.

The publication of *The Year's Work in English Studies* was greatly delayed by war conditions and particularly by the loss of a MS. at sea. This delay and Japan's entry into the war once more almost nullified the distribution of our publications by the British Council, reducing it to 180 copies of *English* at a gain to the Association of £15 . . . and it is hoped that *Essays and Studies*, Volume 27, collected by Mr. Nowell Smith, will be published by July, and *The Year's Work*, Volume 21, not much later. Both *Essays and Studies* and *English* are drastically curtailed by the restriction of paper. Naturally no new publication was undertaken during the year.

The Modern Humanities Research Association continued to allow members of the English Association to subscribe to *The Modern Language Review* at the specially reduced rate during the year.

Two well attended lectures were given during the year: on April 26, 1941, the Rev. M. R. Ridley, Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, Oxford, spoke on "Word-Watching and Sense-Spotting"; and on October 4, the Rev. Canon Adam Fox, Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, gave a talk on "Matthew Arnold". The Chairman of Committee, Mr. Nowell Smith, was in the chair.

The Thirty-Fifth Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on Saturday, June 7, 1941, at St. Ermins Restaurant. After the business meeting a luncheon was held at which the President, the Rt. Hon. Viscount Samuel, G.C.B., D.C.L., presided. The Association's two guests were Sir Stephen Gaselee, K.C.M.G., C.B.E., and the Hon. Harold Nicolson, C.M.G., M.P. In the afternoon the President delivered his address entitled "On Style", Mr. Harold Nicolson taking the chair.

In addition to the loss of three Vice-Presidents, Professor G. L. Kittredge, Lord Rennell of Rodd, and Sir Hugh Walpole, the Committee record with regret the deaths of 17 members (11 Life Members) during 1941, amongst whom special mention may be made of Miss Kate M. Warren as having been actively connected with the work of the Association.

At the Annual Meeting George Gordon, D.C.L., President of Magdalen and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, was elected President of the Association for 1942. In accepting the nomination he had expressed to the Chairman with evident sincerity his pleasure in this anticipation of his return from the all-absorbing cares of office to the studies of his choice. In the autumn he was struck down by the illness which proved fatal. The record of this lamentable loss belongs to the report for 1942. Members of the Association will be glad to hear that the Hon. Harold Nicolson has accepted nomination to the Presidency for 1943—*melioribus opto auspiciis*.

May, 1942.

NOWELL SMITH, Chairman.



*From our Amphibious Contemporary.*—"We approve: *Southerly* . . . the spirit is academic and the flesh is weak, but they're at least honest, unpretentious, and not anti-progressive."—*Angry Penguins*, Number 4.

*September, 1942, Number: Mr. Ryland's Notice.*—The following is from the review by Mr. Frank Ryland before the Fellowship of Australian Writers:

Magazines of a doubtful character are now enjoying record sales, while *Southerly*, the Magazine of the Australian English Association, which I strongly commend to you, had difficulty in appearing at all.

That it reaches its ninth number is due largely to donations from those closely interested.

Like most cultural magazines in Australia, *Southerly* has had to experience many "Stalingrads" in its brave battle for experience.

For the sake of Australian literature, it is to be hoped that it continues publication.

Perhaps the most important contribution in the current issue is a review by Miles Franklin of T. Inglis Moore's *Six Australian Poets*.

This essay by Miles Franklin, besides being a profound estimation of Moore's book, is itself an interpretation of modern trends in our poetry, all of which is set down in Franklin's usual racy Australian style, rich in local imagery. (An example is quoted: "The Pegasus mounted by O'Dowd and Baylebridge", etc.)

Altogether this issue of *Southerly* is of a high standard. There is a page for every mood. Some provide that refreshing Southerly breeze that sometimes springs up at the tail end of a trying Summer's day.

Others evoke a more boisterous mood. Miles Franklin's essay comes as a Southerly buster. It is badly needed to blow away the cobwebs of cultural complacency that are so quickly spun across the doors of our bookcases in these war-fevered, newspaper-reading days.

I hope that those of you who were interested in this brief review, will buy a copy of *Southerly*, or, better still, subscribe to this valuable magazine.

*A "Bulletin" Comment.*—(After mention of *Meanjin Papers* and *Poetry*): "It's a great pity that this literary energy (which also breaks out in the English Association's *Southerly*) can't be coalesced into one big magazine, a quarterly or half-yearly. . . . The Commonwealth Fund, the Fellowship, the Universities—somewhere among these there should be sufficient money and energy to get going a magazine which would represent the reawakening of Australian culture and which would pay for contributions." ("The Magazines", Red Page, March 24.)

*Binding of "Southerly".*—The binding of members' copies of *Southerly* will be arranged on request. Volumes One and Two can be

bound separately, or in one volume, in blue cloth, at the following rates: Volume One, seven shillings; Volume Two, seven shillings; Volumes One and Two together, eight shillings and sixpence. Orders and copies may be left at the University with the Editors, or Miss Herring.

Volumes already bound in blue cloth are obtainable at the following rates: Volume One, thirteen shillings; Volume Two, eleven shillings and sixpence; Volumes One and Two, nineteen shillings.

*Membership of the Association.*—Subscriptions are for the calendar year, but it may not be generally known that those who join the Association in or after October of any year are regarded as being financial for the following year.

*Junior Members.*—The Association admits Junior Members (school pupils and students) at a special subscription of 2s. 6d. a year. This entitles such members to everything except publications.

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